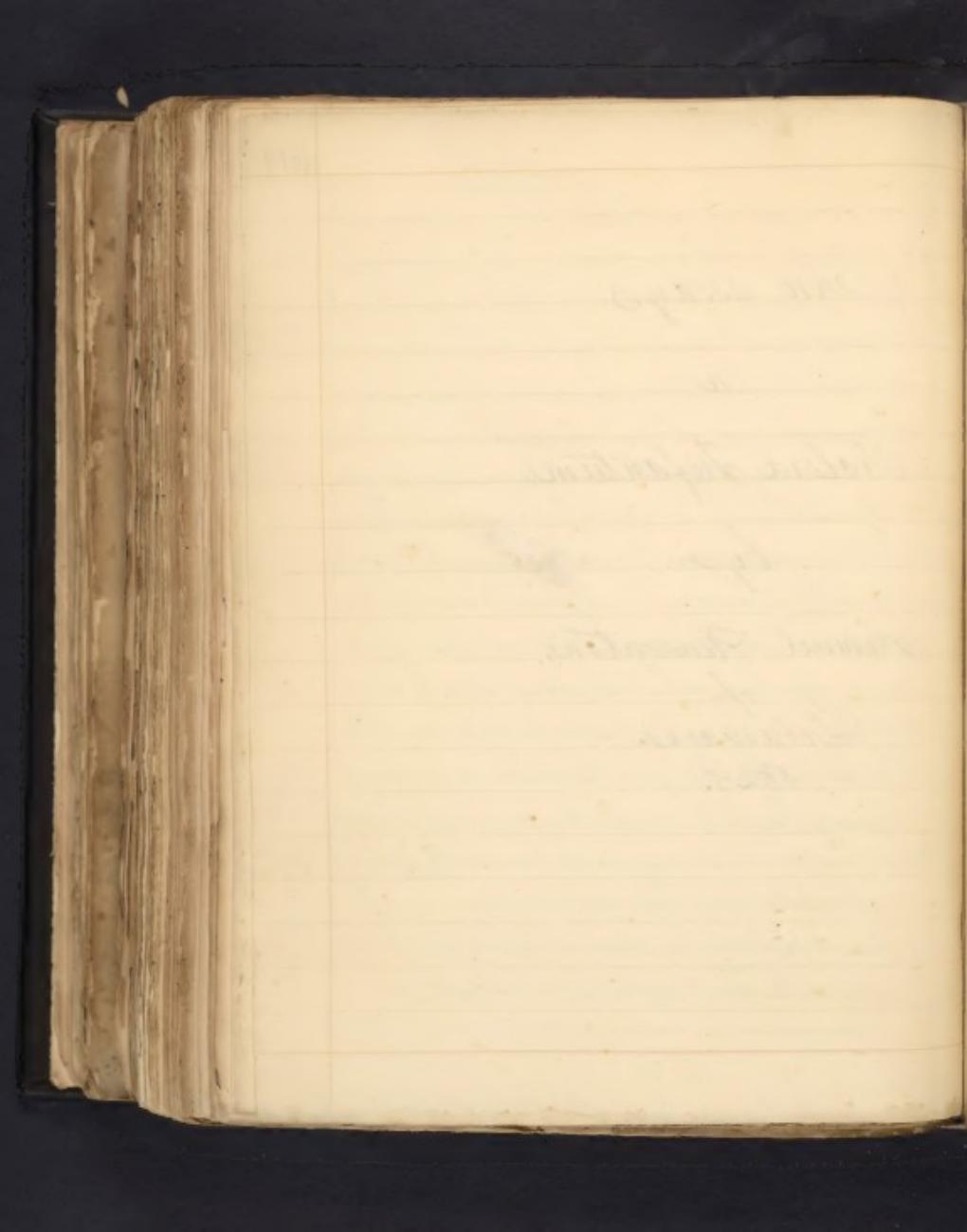


No 19

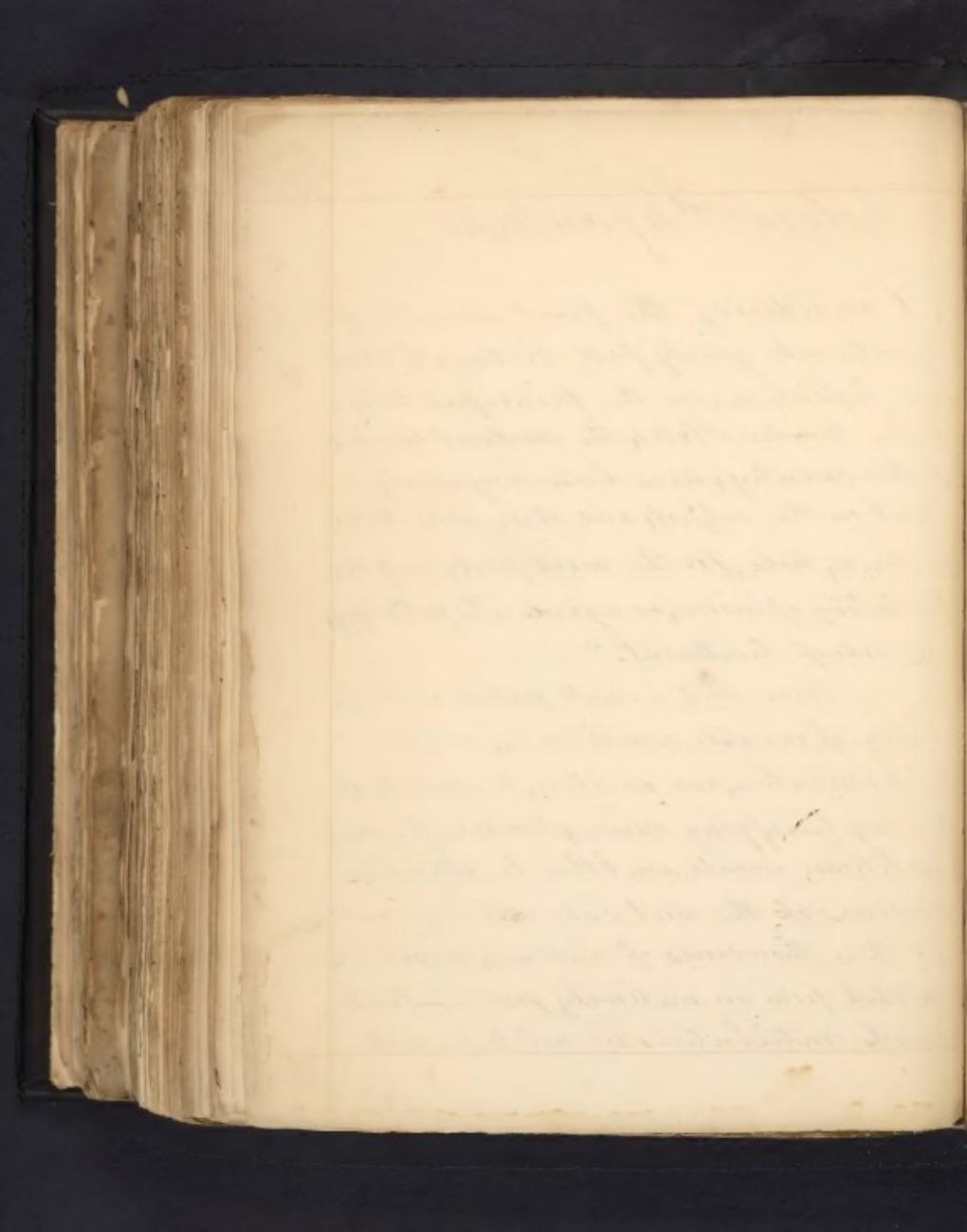
John essays  
on  
Cholera Infantum,  
by  
Samuel Plesanton,  
of  
Delaware.  
1825.



## Cholera Infantum

Considering the great number of Infants, who yearly fall victims to Cholera Infantum, in the principal Cities of the United States, the medical writers of this country, have been singularly silent on the subject; and those who have ventured, hold, for the most part, very contradictory opinions, as regards its pathology, and mode of treatment.

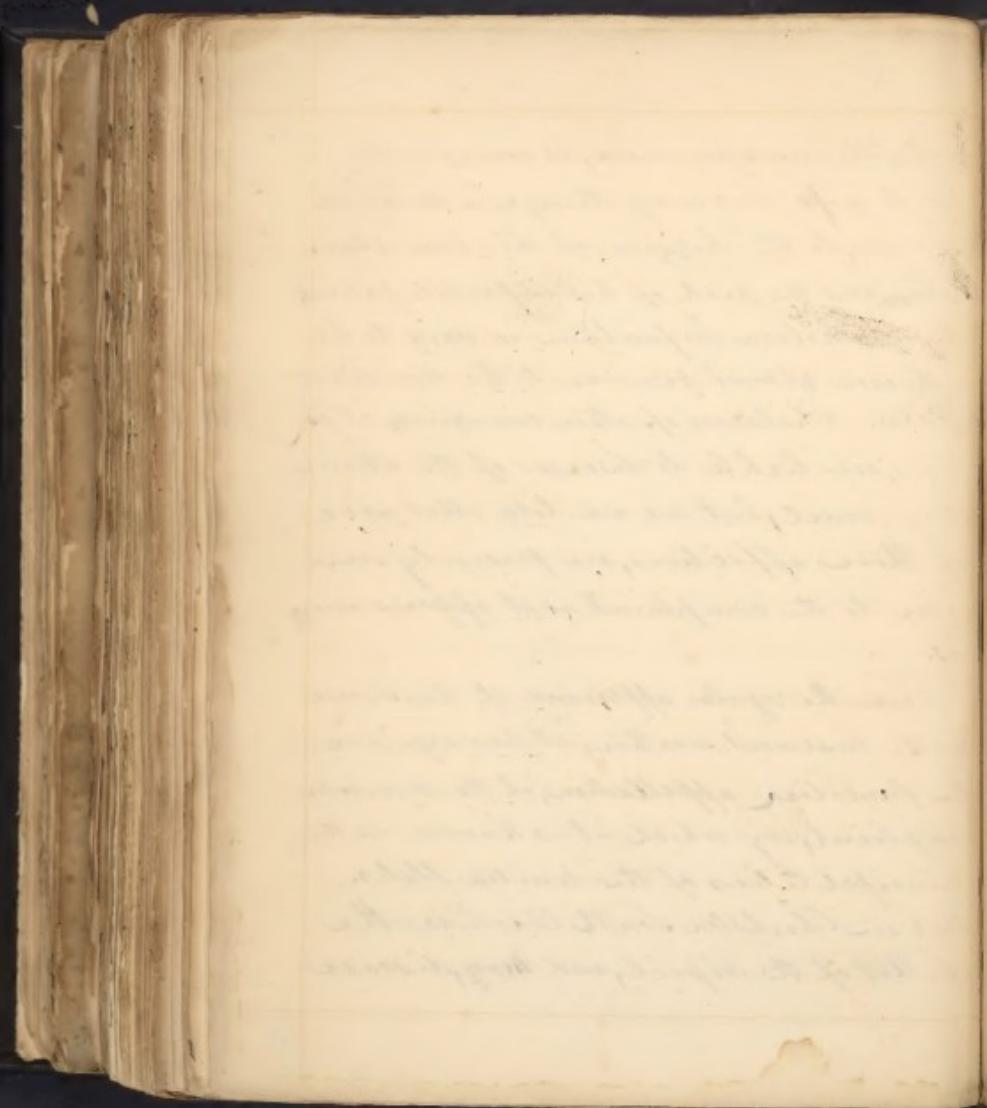
There but a small portion of the experience of our able practitioners, relative to the preservative, and curative, treatment, of this very terrifying disease recorded, the young practitioner would doubtless be placed in possession of the most valuable information, and thus thousands of victims, might be snatched from an untimely grave, — But as such contributions are not to be met



will, the inexperienced, is consequently left to grope his way through a mist of theories, to the hazard of his own character, and the risk of his infantile patient.

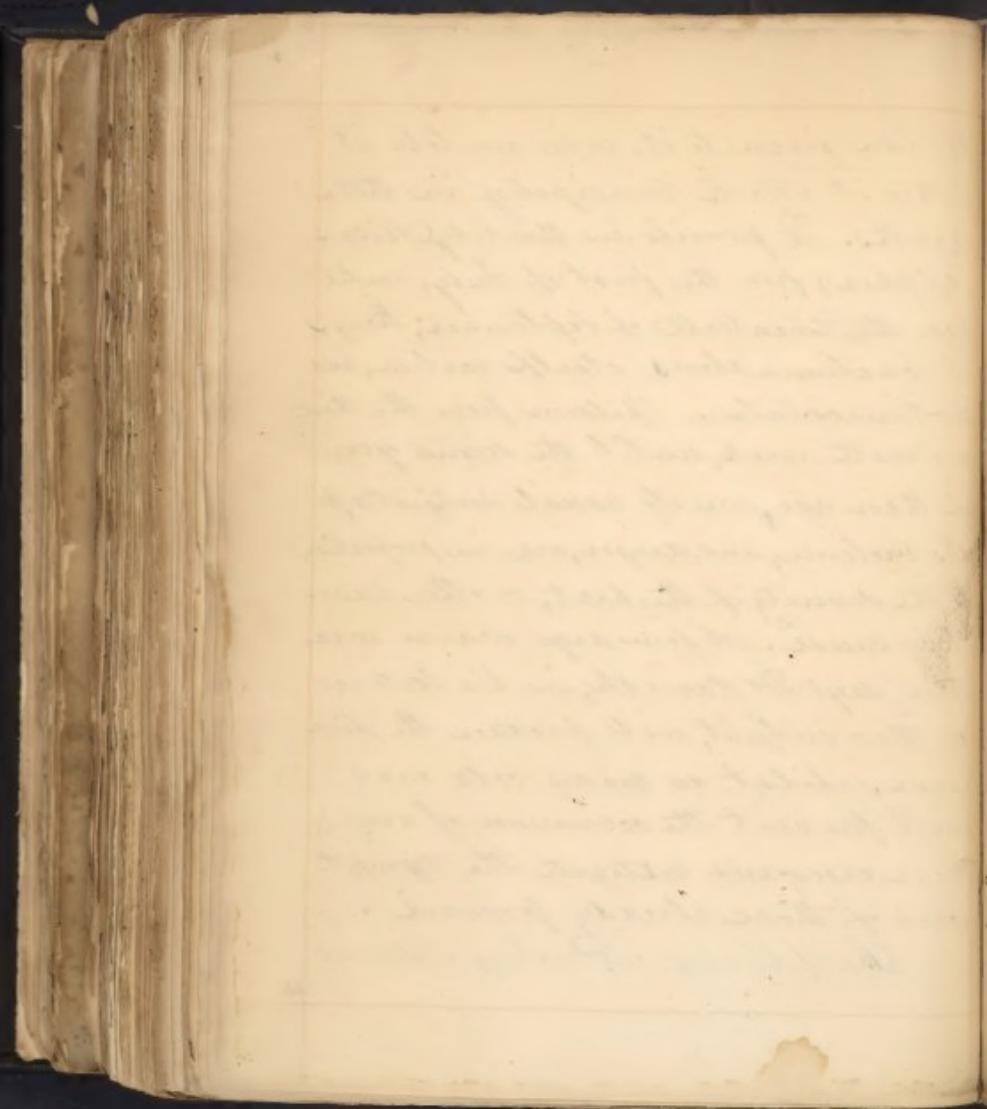
Cholera Infantum is said to be a disease almost peculiar to the United States. Children of other countries, it is true, are liable to diseases of the alimentary canal, but we are told that none of those affections, are precisely similar to the complaint as it appears among us.

From the regular appearance of this disease in the warmest weather, it has acquired the familiar appellation, of the summer complaint, by which it is known in the principal Cities of the United States. But in Charleston South Carolina the epithet of the April, and May, disease



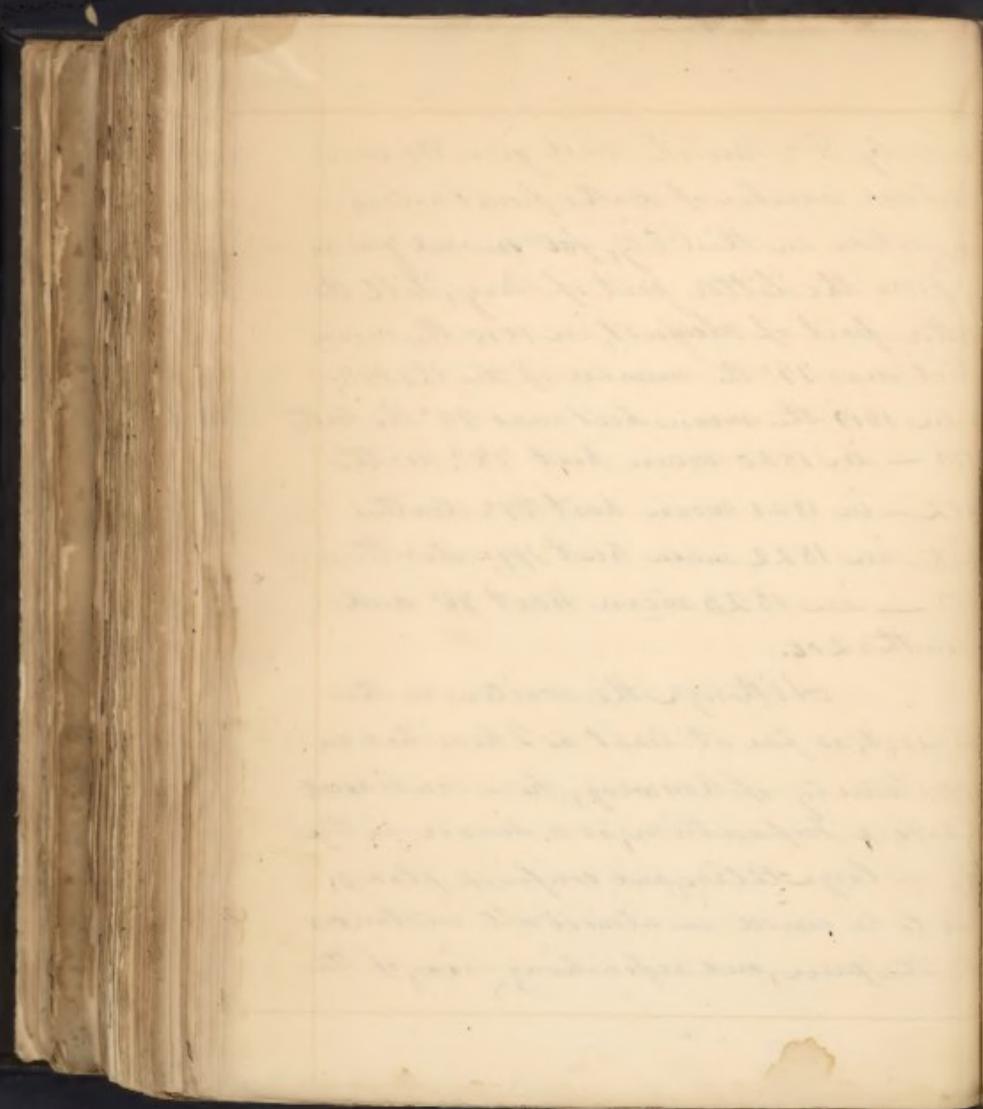
has been given to it, as we are told it makes its attack principally in those months. It prevails in this City (Philadelphia) from the first of July, until near the twentieth of September; though it sometimes shows itself earlier, and continues later. Children from the third or fourth week, until the second year of their age, are its usual subjects; its violence, and danger, are in proportion to the severity of the heat, or other exciting cause. A few days warm weather, says Dr Parry, in his lectures on this subject, will produce the disease, whilst as many cold ones will prevent the occurrence of any new cases, and mitigate the symptoms of those already produced.

The following interesting statement



made by Dr Parish will give the mean heat and number of deaths from Cholera Infantum in this City, for several years - From the latter part of May, till the latter part of August, in 1818 the mean heat was  $74^{\circ}$  the number of deaths 144, — in 1819 the mean heat was  $78^{\circ}$  the deaths 170. — in 1820 mean heat  $78^{\circ}$ ; deaths 202, — in 1821 mean heat  $77^{\circ}$ ; deaths 158, — in 1822 mean heat  $77^{\circ}$ ; deaths 113, — in 1823 mean heat  $76^{\circ}$  and deaths 206.

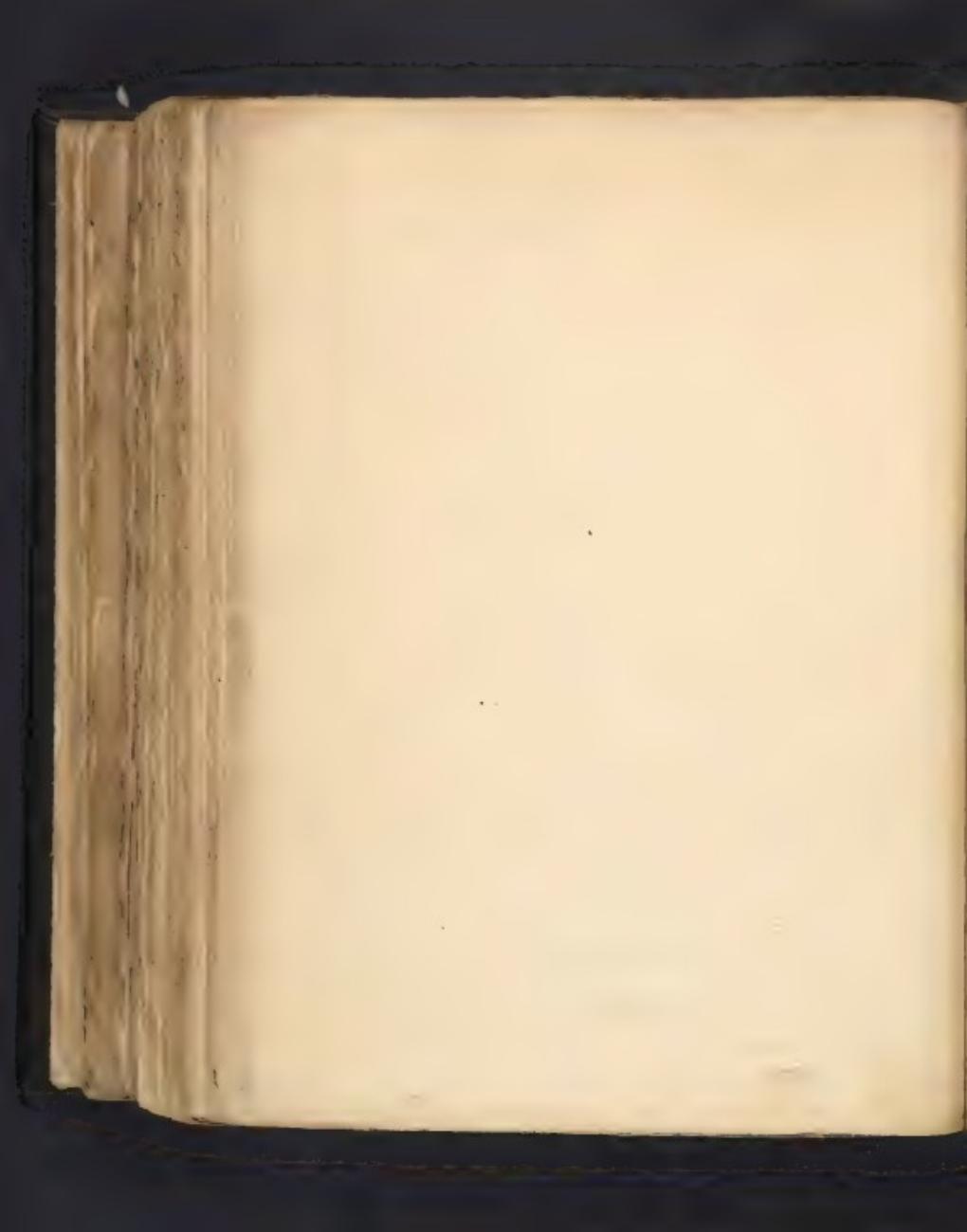
Although the writers on this subject, as far at least as I have had an opportunity of knowing, have considered Cholera Infantum, as a disease entirely of large cities, and confined places, and to be cured in almost all instances by the pure, and refreshing air, of the



country, yet the great variety of some  
peculiarities, compels us to believe that  
it frequently makes its appearance in  
isolated, and otherwise healthy situa-  
tions in the country, and that under  
these circumstances occurs an effect  
of a removal to the city.

The most common, and indeed, probably  
in this disease, the most predominant,  
is suppose, in early life, which act  
of facilitating the tender infant, and  
tending the system to the more prompt  
operation of the exciting causes. Among  
these last, are generally reckoned, crude and  
stale custard, and other injurious articles  
of diet, together with improper clothing.

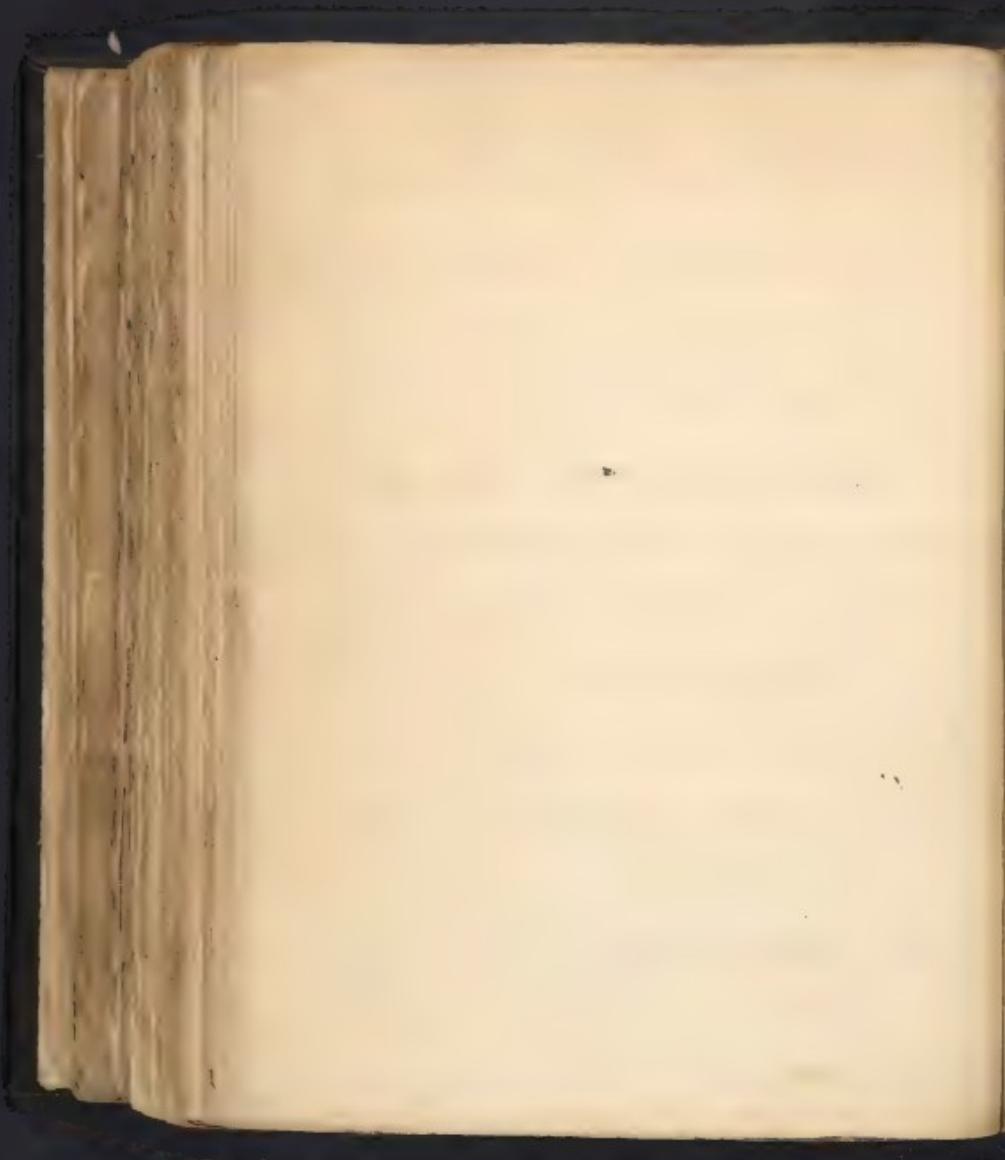
It is also said to be increased and ag-  
gravated, by worms, tentacles, &c. &c. which  
may account in some degree for its ap-



6

pearance in the more healthy parts of the country.

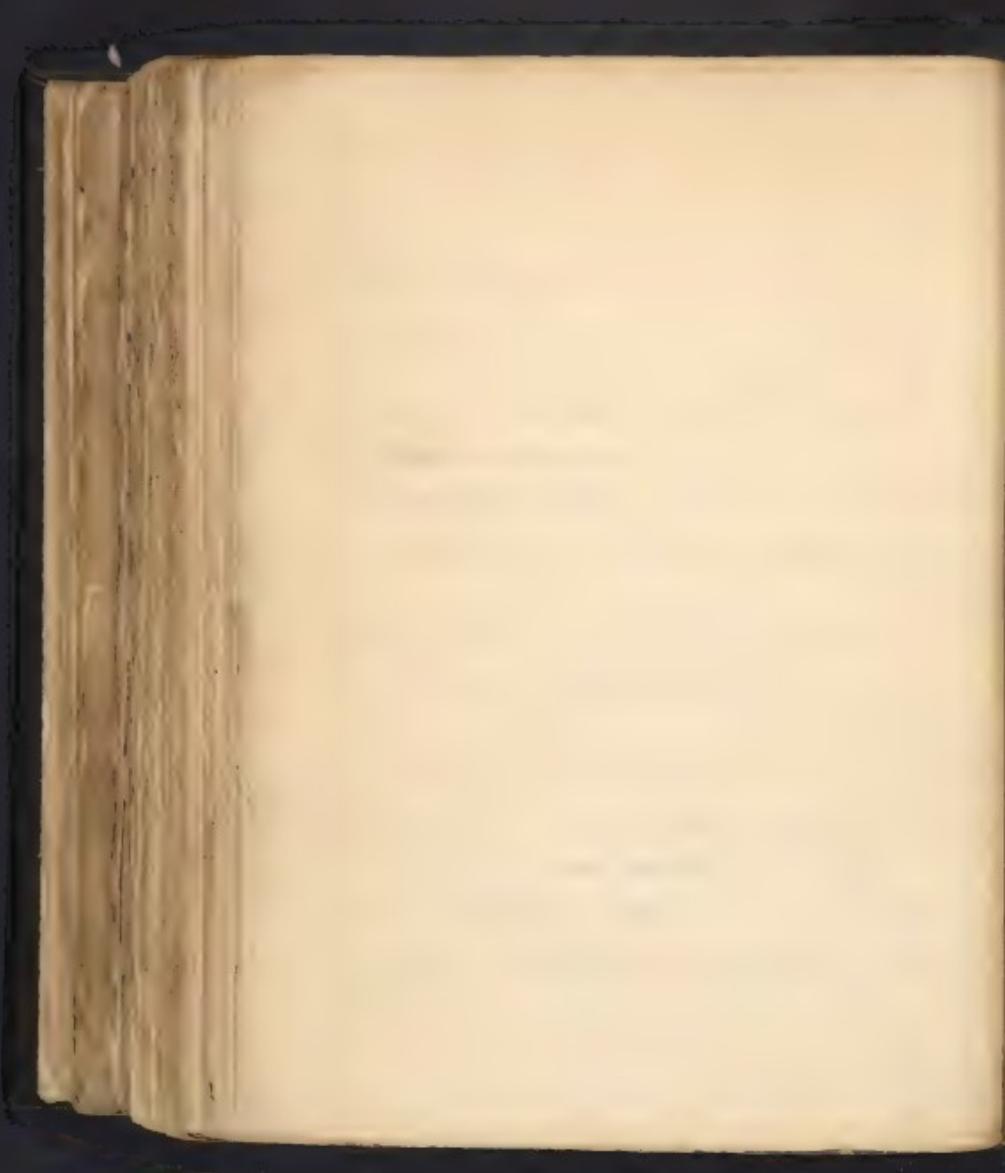
The appearance upon dissection, prove that the contents of the body are not in the least degree affected, and that it is upon the abdominal viscera, and the ovaries that the disease seems to exert its wages. The mucous membrane of the alimentary canal, seems to be the principal seat of the disease, this being variegated by the appearance of dark red spots, especially in the stomach, and duodenum. Occasionally the peritoneum, assumes the same appearance. As we would naturally suppose, the liver is most commonly considerably affected, being increased in size and transparency. Sometimes it is intersected with the gall bladder filled with bile very much diluted from natural secretions.



condition. The spleen and pancreas are sometimes involved in the diseased action.

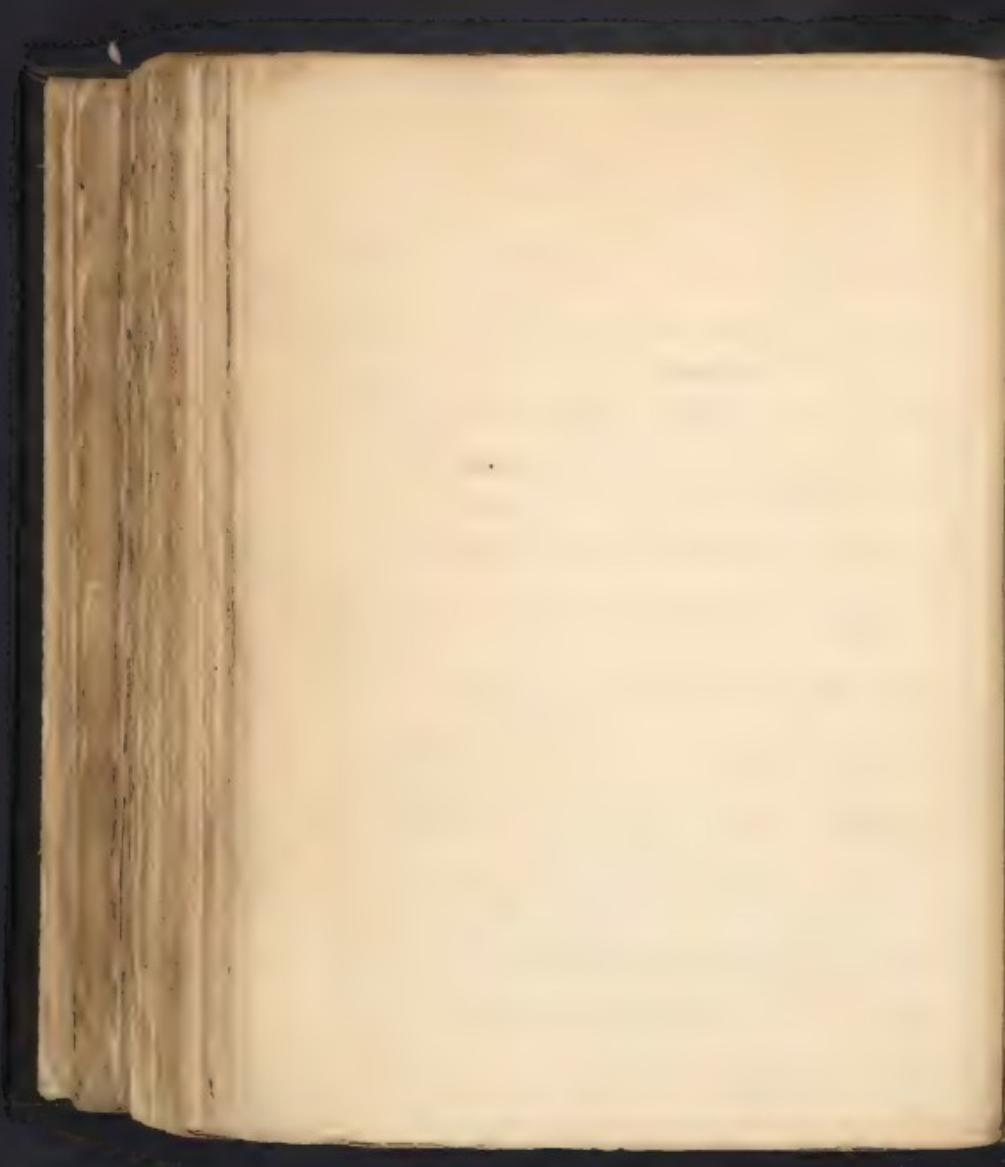
Conjoining the principal causes and symptoms of cholera In-an-tum with the appearance upon dissection, it may be clearly inferred, that it is a gastric disease, bearing a close affinity to the Cholera Morbus, from which it chiefly differs in attacking infants, whilst the latter is incident to more advanced life.

In cholera In-an-tum, first there is sleep, by a shrank appearance of the neck, puffed countenance, and other signs of lethargy, which symptoms are generally soon followed, either by a diarrhoea, or by a violent vomiting and burping with a high fever. The matter discharged from the stomach, is generally yellow or green whereas the stools are slimy and bloody.



without any distincture of red. In some  
it has a grey, mealy & sandy appearance, but  
in others they are nearly as limpid as water.  
Blow-meats are frequently discharged in the  
course of the disease. Considerable pain  
attends the first stage, which is manifes-  
ted by the patient's stretching up their  
fist and nose oppressing it, in a posture.

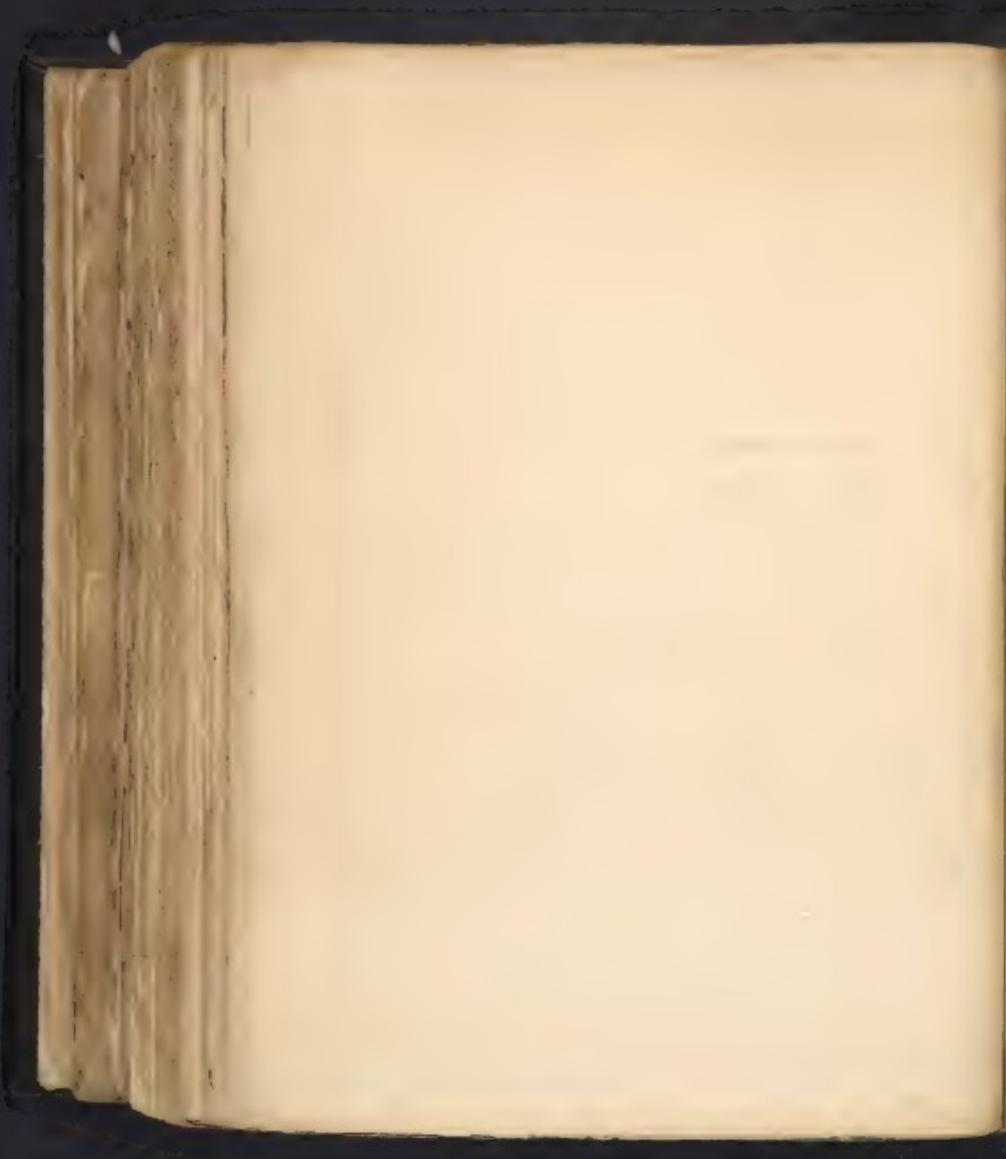
The pain is quick and weak. The head  
unusually warm, whilst the extremities  
have their natural heat & incline to  
be cold. The accompanying fever is of  
the undiminished, with its principal  
exacerbations towards evening. The affec-  
tion of the head is sometimes so violent  
as to produce considerable tremors. A  
twitching thro' the body usually attends the  
disease. The stabs which take place  
throughout the disease are frequently



large and fated.

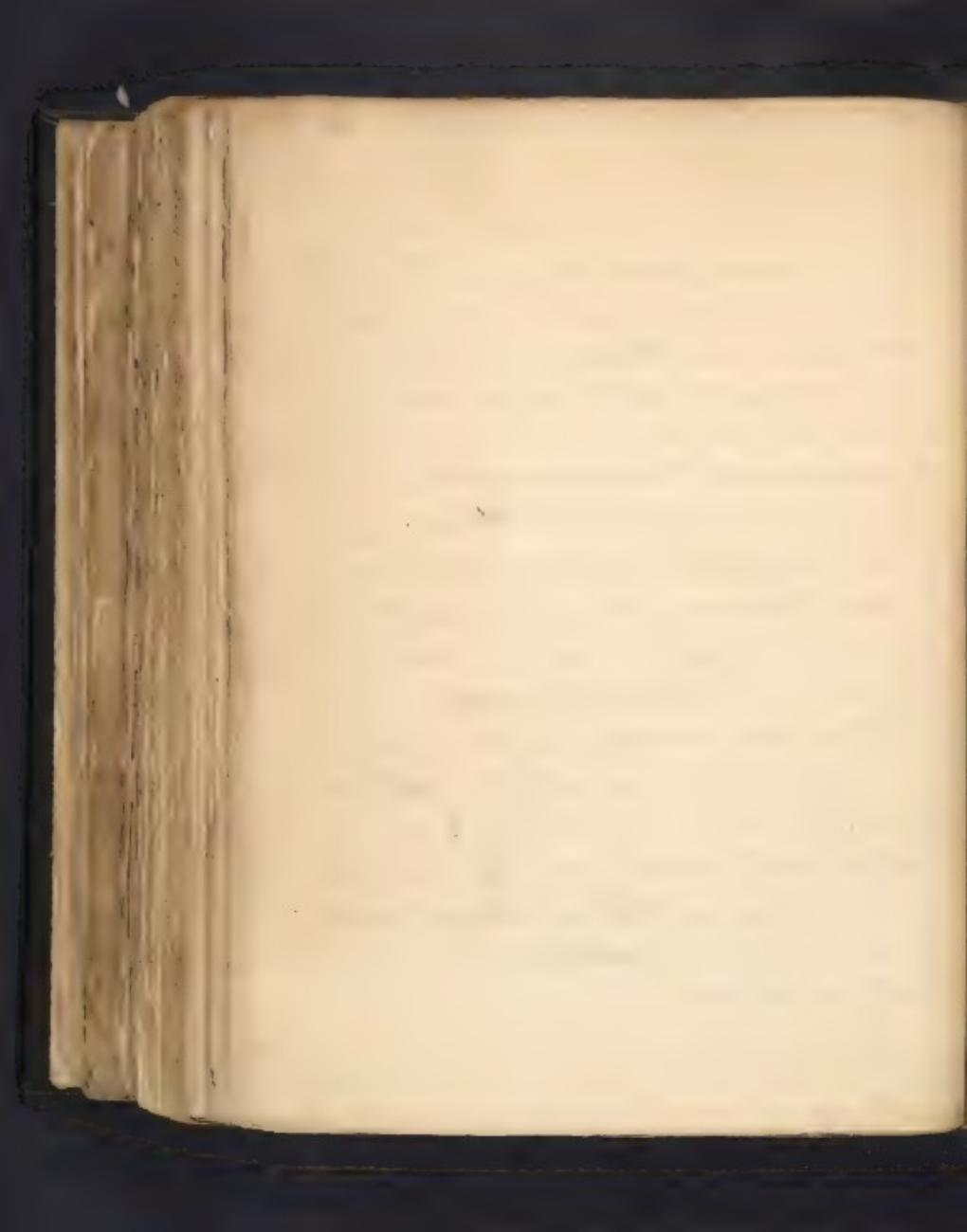
The malignant properties are the intense heat of the infection and all related with great swelling, it often opens upon the skin, occasions so the mouth, inguinal, cavernous and finally that peculiar and striking expression of countenance, denominated "hickey" or "scrofula".

In regard to the most proper treatment of Skrofulous Inflammation, there appears to be a just variety of opinion. Some strongly assert that there is no inflammation and of course no necessity for using the leeches or other leeching means; while on the contrary, others of equal unexceptionable character assert, that it is in all cases an inflammatory disease and to be treated in the first instance by antiphlogistic measures. Under such circumstances it is diffi-



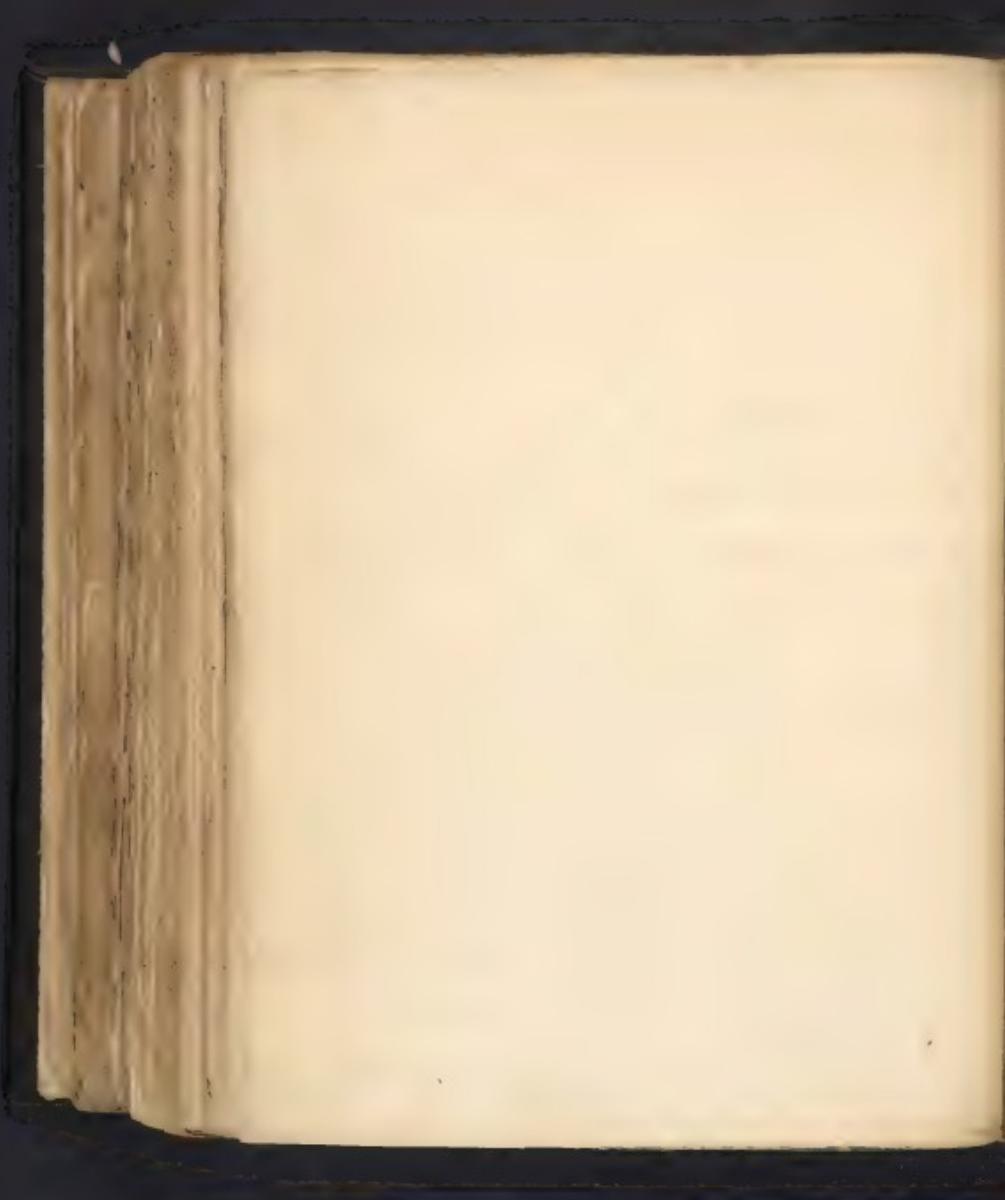
all for one devoid of much experience  
to see the most proper course. Without  
therefore <sup>than</sup> time upon the comparative  
merits of either side of the question, I  
shall proceed to state the treatment I  
should be led to adopt from a view of  
the practice of those upon whose Judge-  
ment I can rely with confidence.

It is confessed by those conversant  
in the treatment of this disease, that in  
many cases unless the <sup>cause</sup> be removed,  
(which is to be done by changing a infected  
City, for a pure country air,) all remedies  
are utterly devoid of utility. When  
poverty or other circumstances prevent  
a visit to the country during the attack  
upon the inner parts, then it is that  
the skill of the Physician, is most nu-  
gently required.

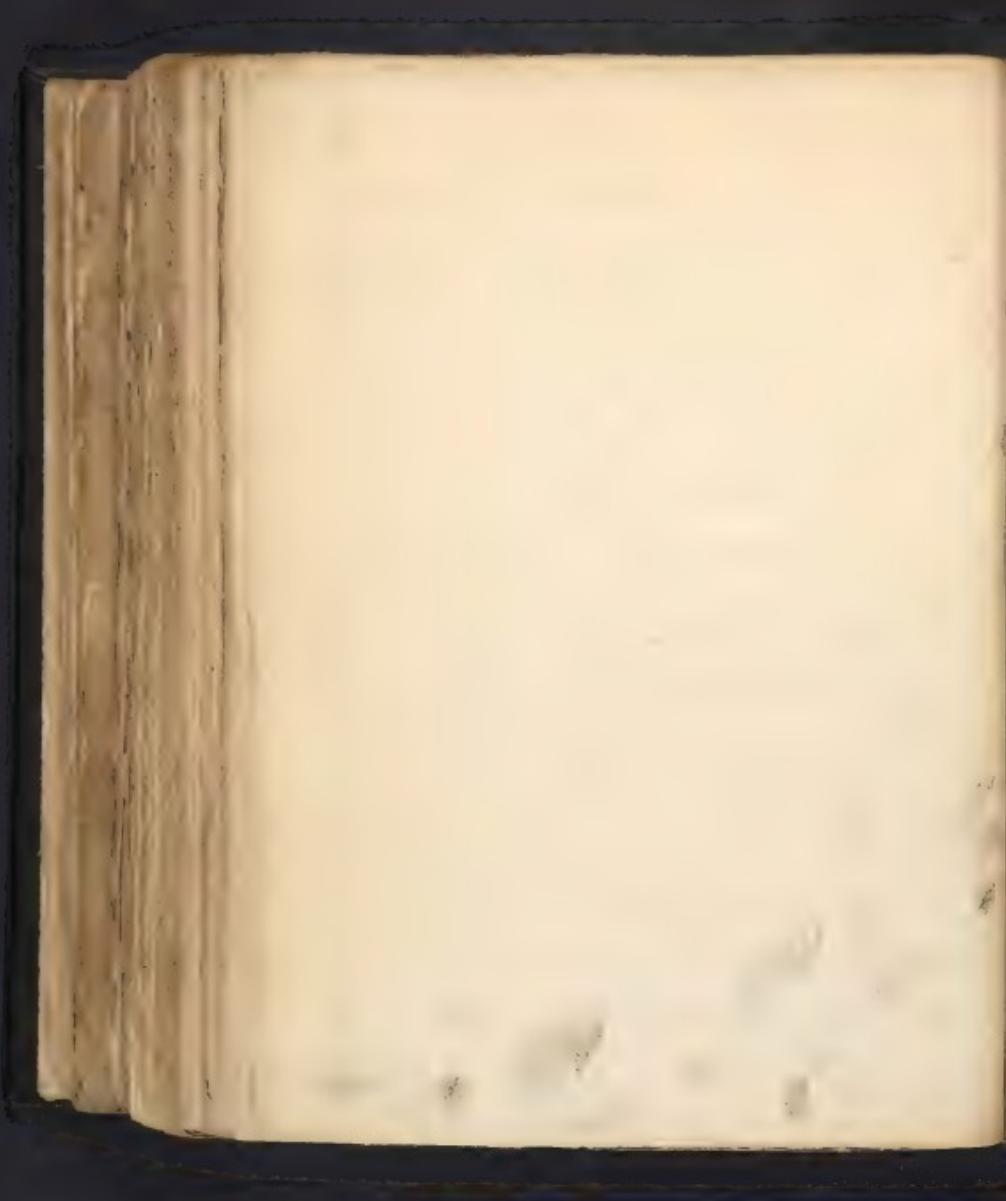


The disease being seated principally in  
the intestines it would naturally appear  
that we should first direct our attention  
to the evacuation of their irritating  
contents, as a means of restoring them  
to their healthy condition.

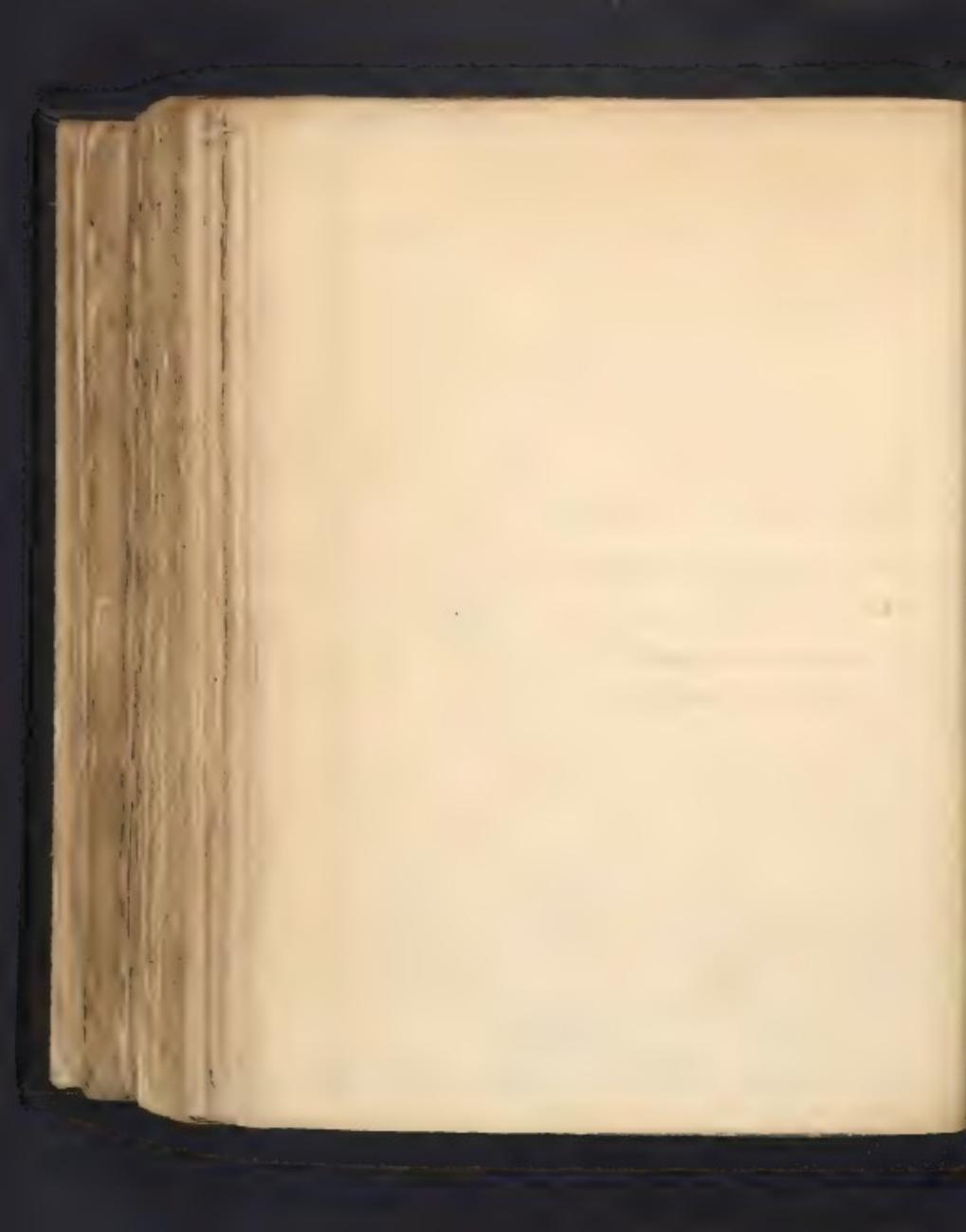
For this purpose Castor oil is common-  
ly used, and in mild cases it will be  
particularly applicable. — But where  
there is so great a degree of irritability  
of the stomach as not to retain  
screely any thing together with an  
elevation of pulse, with a hot dry  
heat, we should, as in almost all kinds  
of complaints, of an inflammatory  
nature here recourse to despatch  
with the unctuous ointment. In conjunc-  
tion with this practice, we must not  
neglect the warm bath and the in-



jections, and for violent & the epigastric-  
cium. When this practice has been  
used to the proper extent we may have  
recourse to purgatives. For this pur-  
pose a variety of medicines have been  
highly recommended. Dr. Parish  
states that he has used the syrup of  
Rhubarb with decidedly beneficial  
effects. The late Dr. Miller of New  
York has recommended with the same  
intention, one sixth of a grain of calomel,  
given every half hour or hour until  
the stools become natural. Later ex-  
periments in this city afford reason to  
believe, that for this purpose no pre-  
scription is so decidedly advantageous,  
as a combination of Calomel and Senna.  
Over other purgatives it possesses the  
important advantages of being insipid

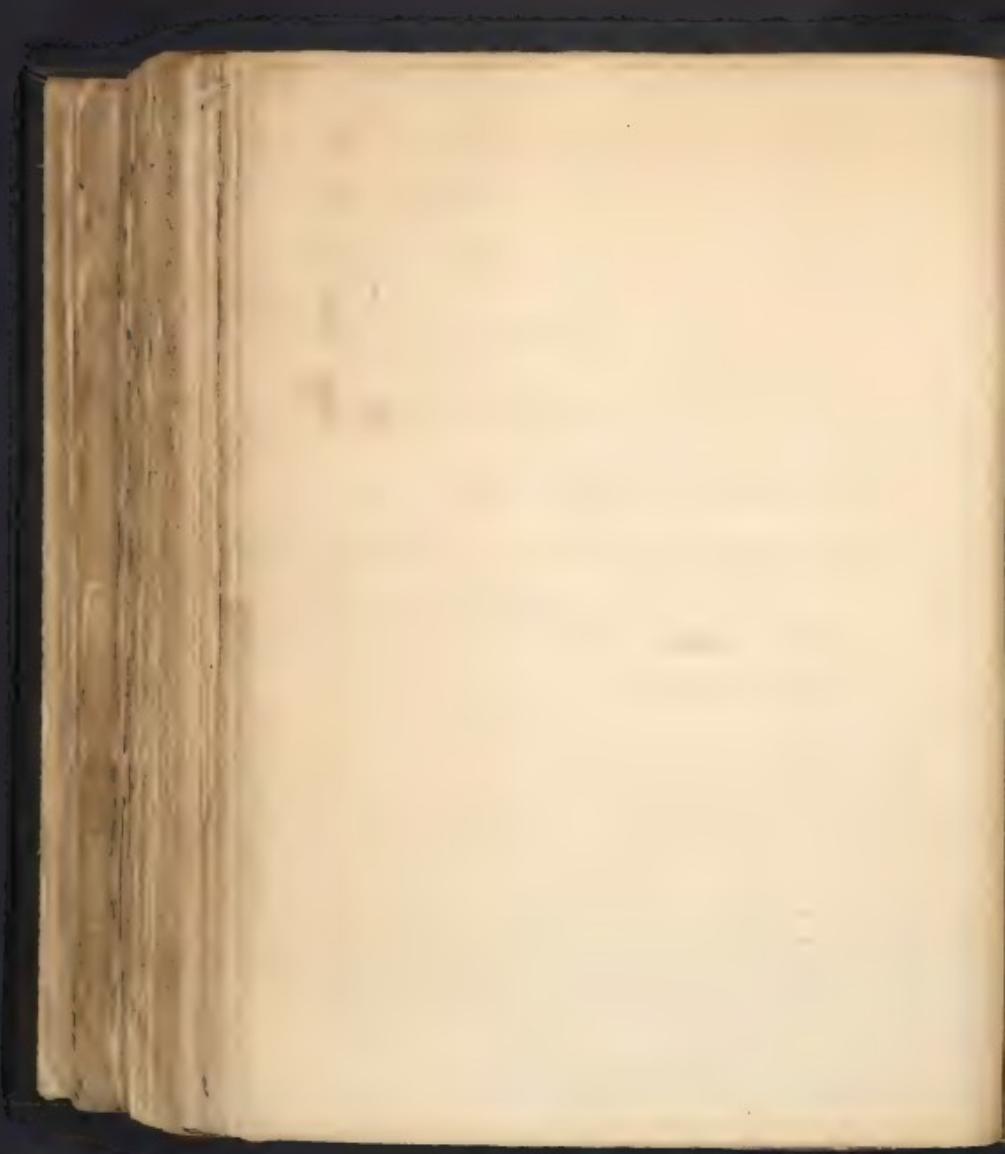


small in bulk, and in consequence of  
its great specific gravity, not liable to  
be rejected by vomiting. This pra-  
-ctice though well suited to most cases  
is not adapted to all, for there are  
some in which the purgative distinctly  
is so vehement that purgation cannot  
be used at all. — Such cases are dis-  
-tinguished by violent vomiting, thirst,  
quick脉搏 pulse, hot skin, and  
other severe symptoms. Under those  
circumstances emetics of species hanc  
have been recommended. These we  
have reason to suspect the existence  
of inflammation. If practice is  
highly esteemed, its effects being to  
determine the circulating fluids, from  
the interior to the surface and thus  
exert a heating action. If the emetic



of opiacachine should not be considered a proper article for administration owing to its extreme irritability of the stomach, the vomiting may be removed by the administration of small diluteant drunks, such as weak infusion of Camomile flowers, tepid water &c.

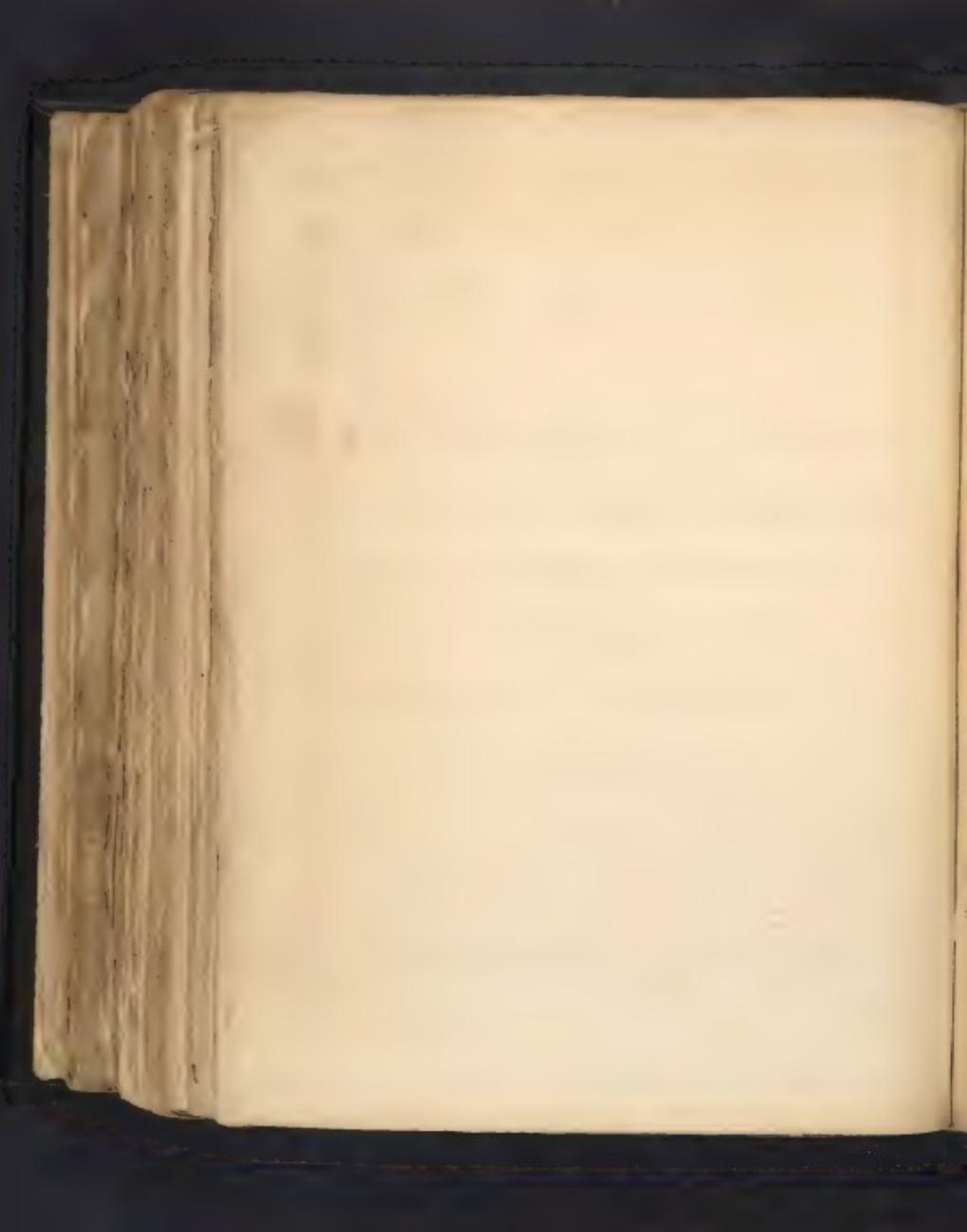
The Stomach being nicely well cleared of its offensive contents, we should do not our attention to the allaying the irritability of that organ, which is to be done by milk and turnerwater in tea-spoonfull doses. For the same purpose, the spirit of cinnamon has been recommended in doses of from ten to thirty drams according to the age of the patient, to be repeated three or four times in the course of the day. To this treatment may be added, a flis. oil &c. in the region of the stomach, or



in milder cases the application of a warm poultice of hops or flannels wet with warm spirits will often answer the same purpose.

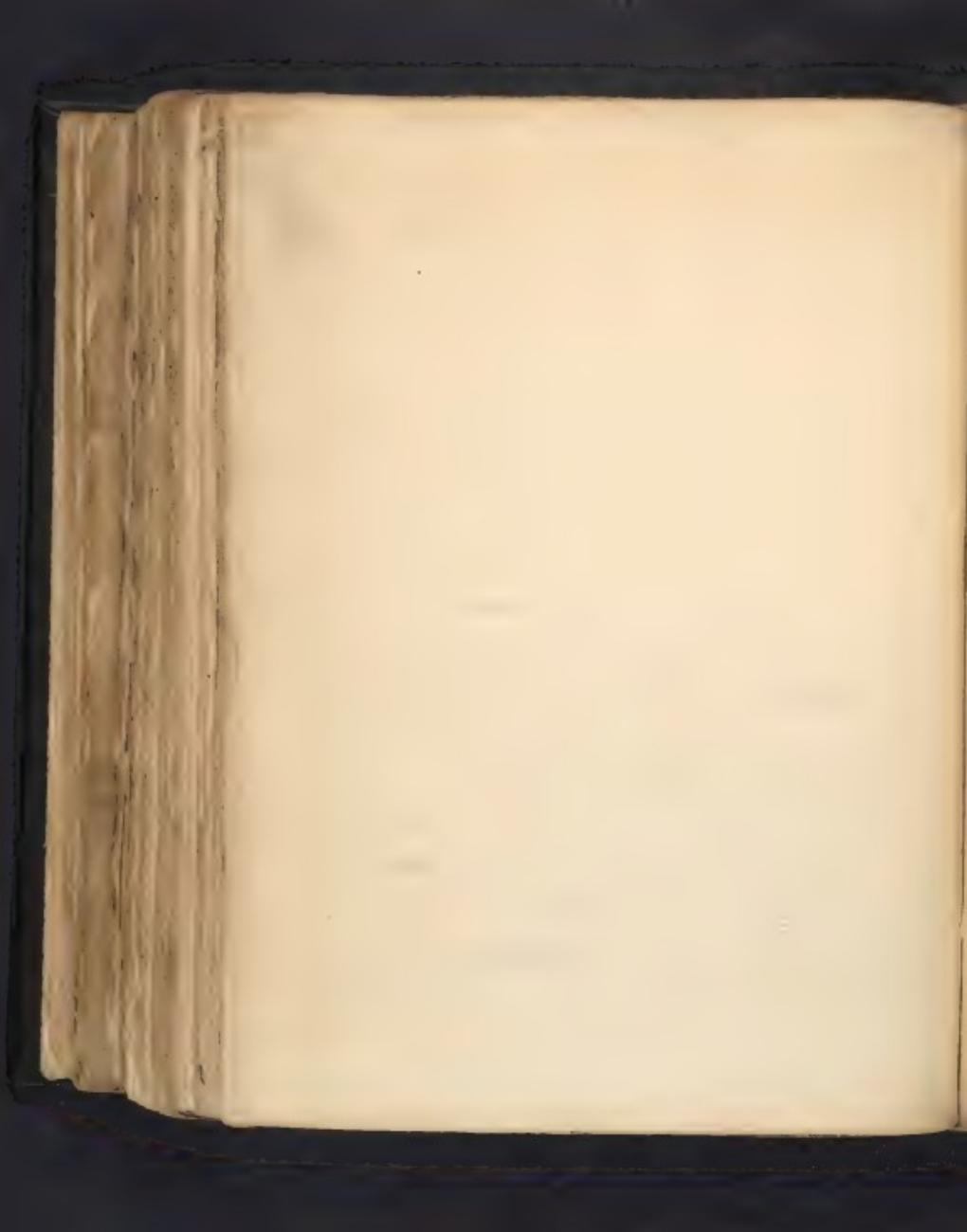
Should we immediately after having choaked the vomiting proceed in the evacuation of the alimentary canal. I am disposed to think, that we should probably see the patient already much infested, so as to induce a state of septicity, totally irreparative. I am therefore inclined to believe, that we should not proceed to further alimentary evacuations until we have overhauled the system with more violent purges.

Having thus prepared the stomach and system generally, we are next to the use of emetics and purgatives, but this may be persisted in until the bowels are the



wrongly cleaned of life or other offensive  
matter, see I hold those irritating accumu-  
lations to be the source of great mischiefs  
— In our intestinal viscerations we  
must proceed with caution, observing  
always the degree of prostration existing  
from such practice. When our pauges  
seem to be too debilitating, we should  
omit them for an interval, and recur  
again to them, when the occasion may  
seem proper. Thus, by alternating purging,  
with slightly tonic medicines we shall  
support a patient from the fatal if-  
-ests of long prostration.

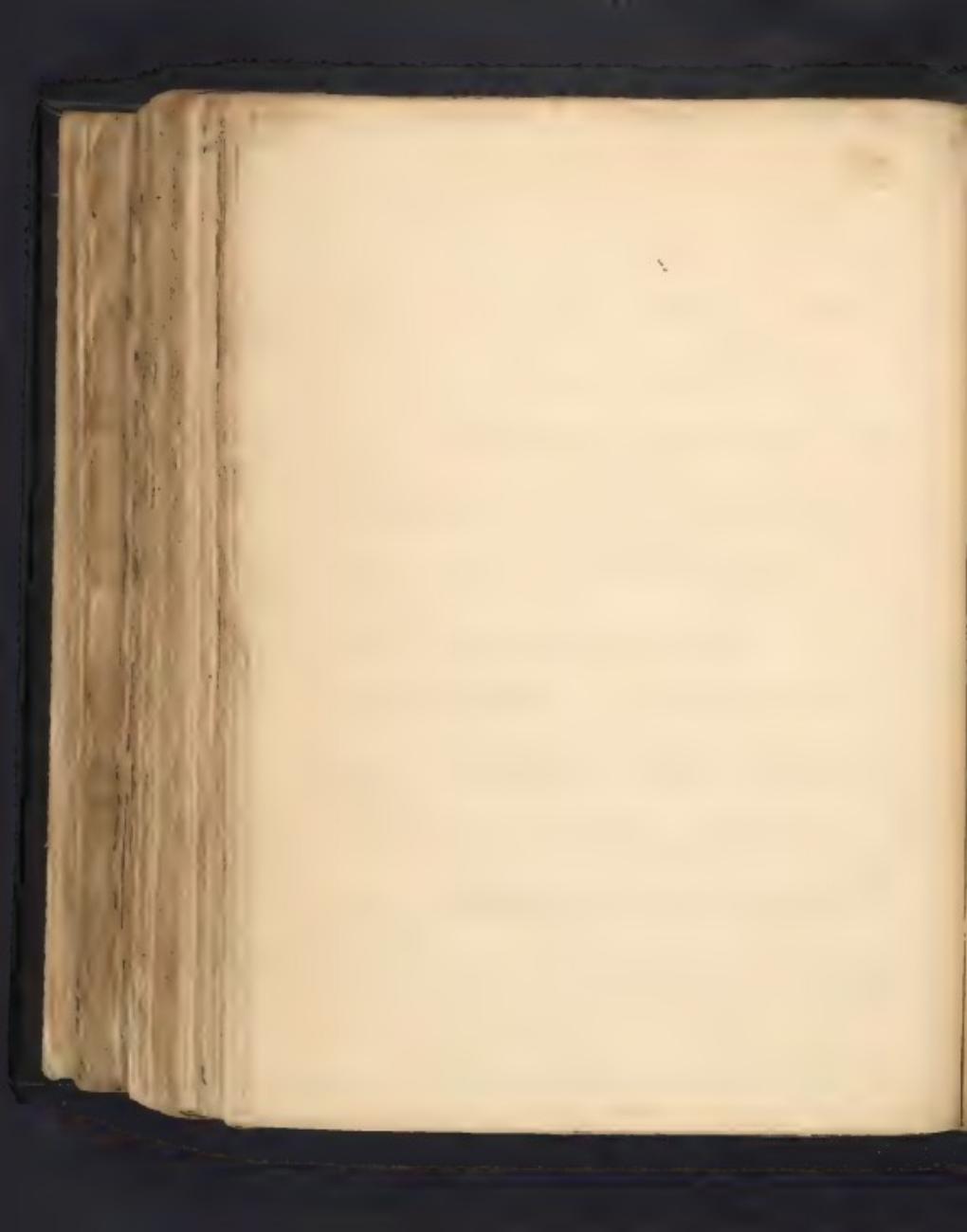
Should the disease become chronic  
attended with evacuations of dark co-  
-coated offensive matter, Dr Robert  
Hobson has recommended, almost as  
a specific, a combination of charcoal,



cheeks, and Specaculars, repeat  
every two or three hours, as may be  
required. When we have pretty  
well evacuated an ordinary sensible  
stool in the next place there recourse  
to these medicines, which have the  
double effect of determining to the  
surface, and allaying morbid action.

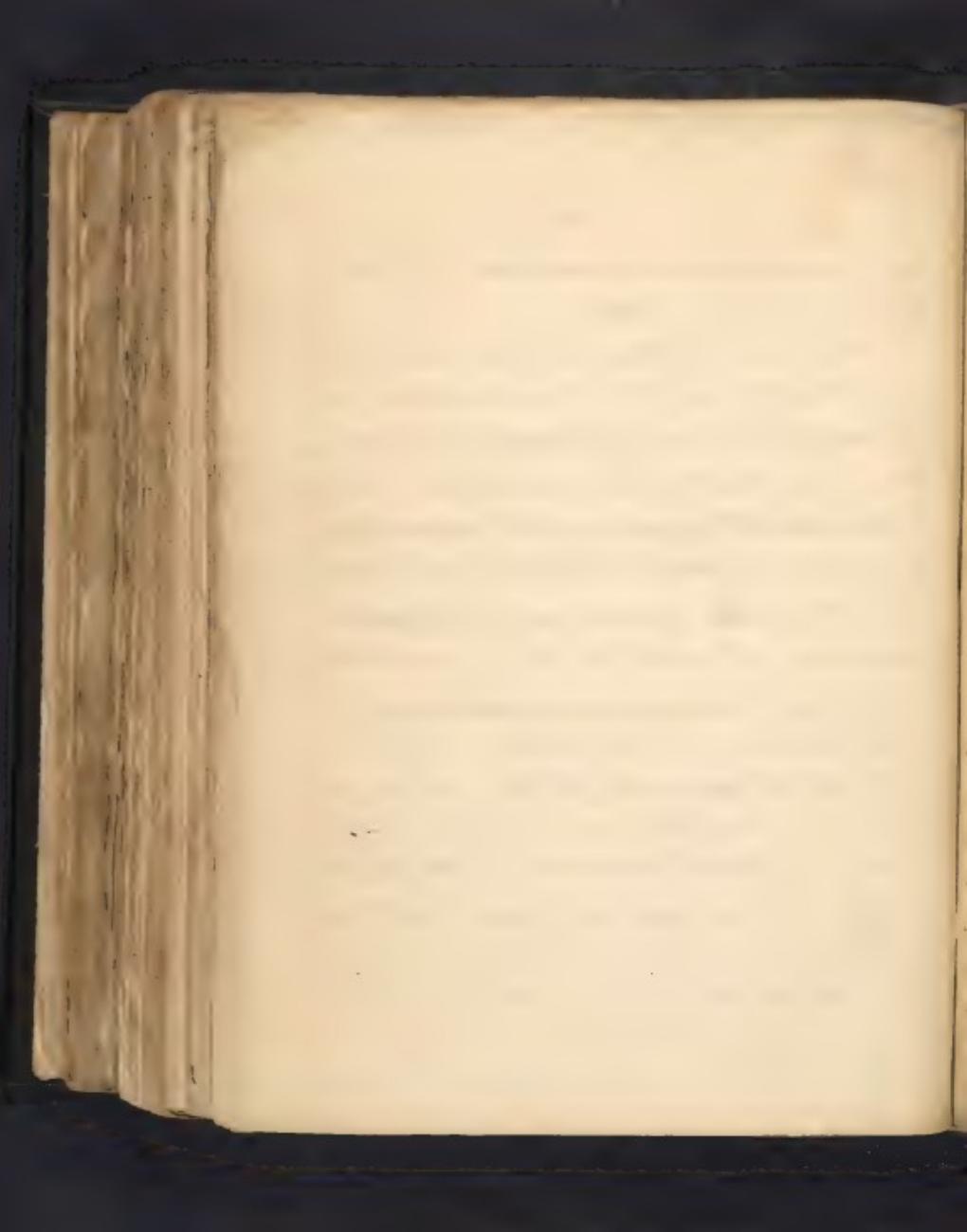
For this purpose the most pro-  
per, and I presume the best, pre-  
scription, consists of Specularia,  
calomel and opium, which may  
be mixed in such proportions as will  
enable them to keep the bowels loose,  
allay spasmodic uneasiness, and deter-  
mine distinctly to the surface.

When the disease is attended with  
opious evacuation, together with vio-  
lent pain and irritation the proper



sisters may be used. These should be large and applied to the stomach, and will in consequence stop up the passage in a short time. In stockings, large enough to reach above the knee, should be worn, and the child allowed the benefit of the cold air.

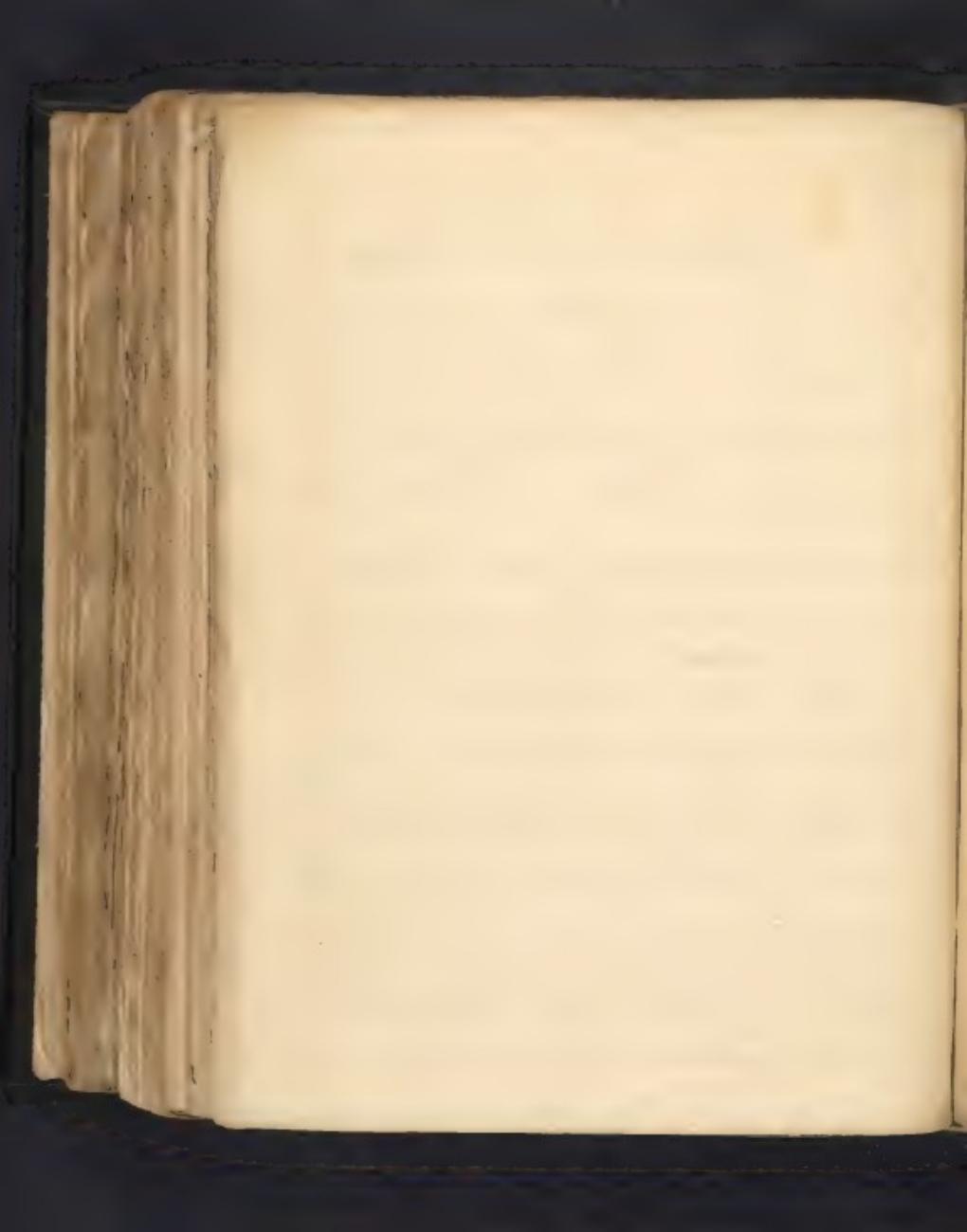
This was informed by the Dr. in Boston, not a five hundred miles distant, who examined, checked the history, confirmed his impression, and said the child had an inflammation in the glands, an affection of the heart, and that it was the seat of the stomach which was so sensitive with pain which could not be well described, or well to express its precise location. The various operations have been recom-



mentioned by most writers, for the removal of those symptoms. For the same purpose, and with similar success, the vegetable astringent and tonics, as recommended by Dr. Brown, & which we have, in these cases, only used, have highly extatated.

In those cases attended with torpor and languor with the symptoms just enumerated, viz. irritability, and debility of the stomach, we may use with success in most cases a combination of Rhei bark, magnesia and Siccum. Aodyne in doses repeated occasionally, are also highly recommended.

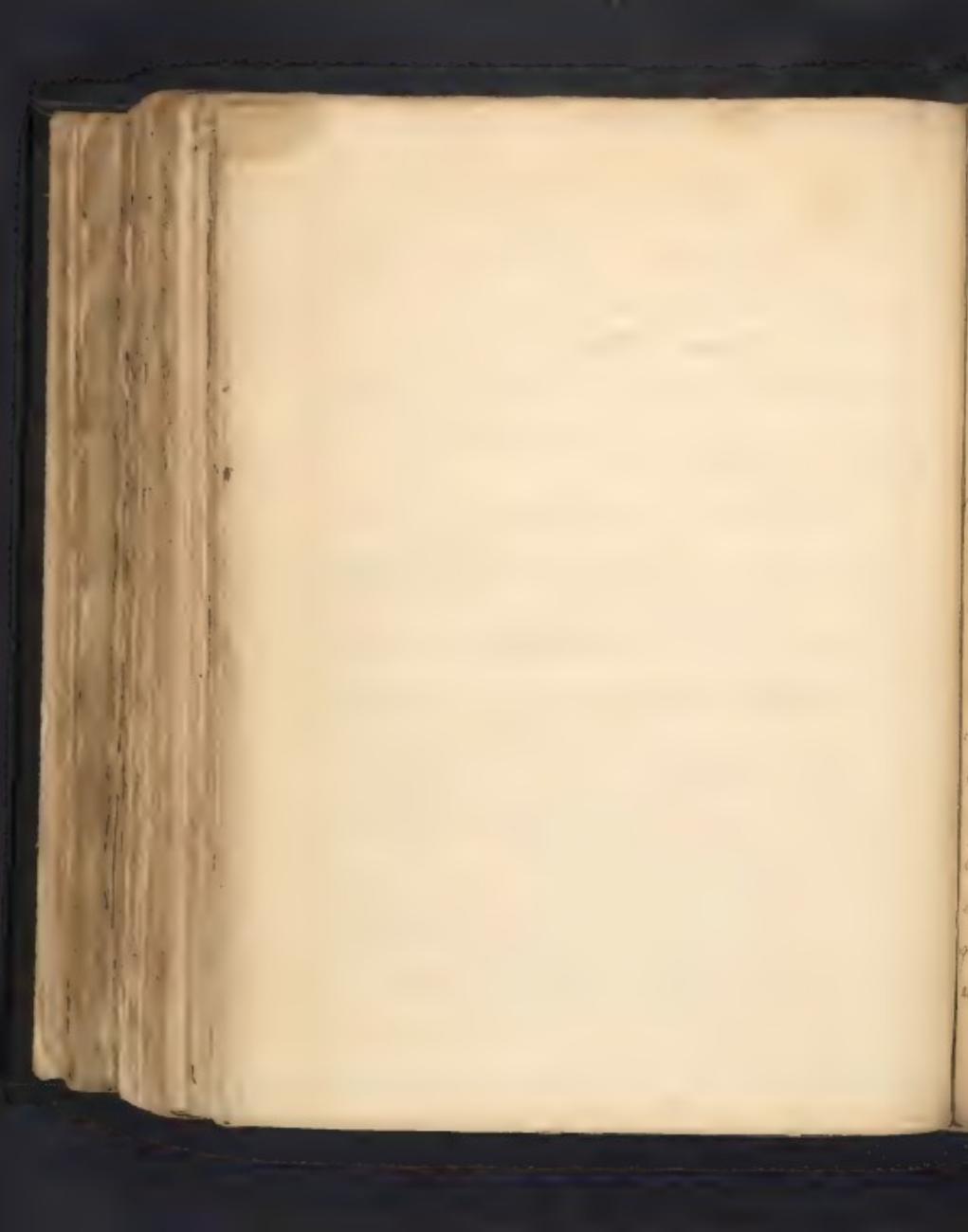
In the latter stages of cholera infantum, after the acute symptoms have subsisted, a profuse diaphoresis



almost always attends, and demands our attention. For the shocking of this disease  
charge numerous medicines have been  
employed, among which, are alum, the  
essence of saturn, calomel, chalk, in-  
fusion of gall, and tincture of tin.

A very favourite prescription with  
Doctor Physick, is the logwood, in  
infusion giving a dessert spoonfull  
every two or three hours.

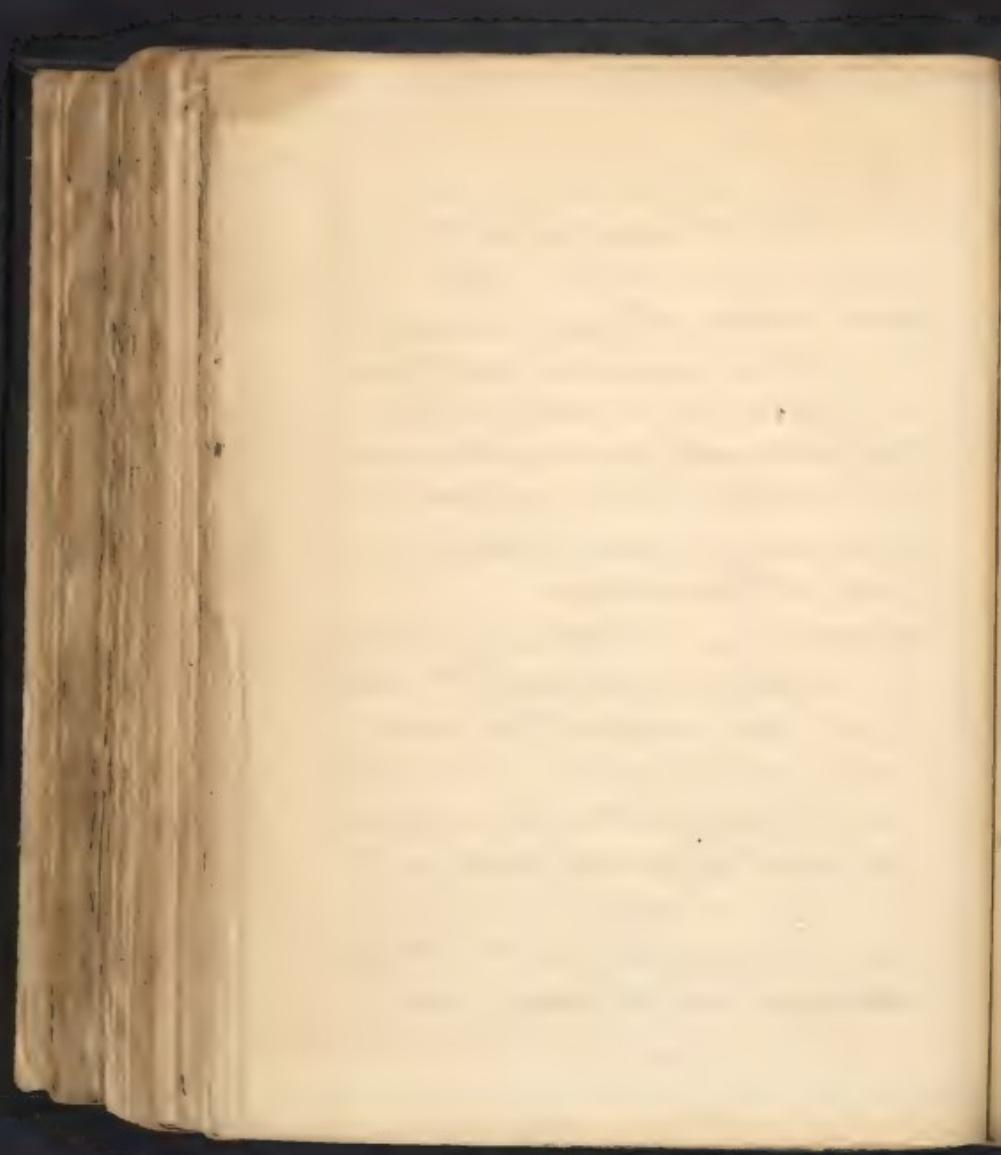
Dr Chapman, in his lectures, speaks very  
highly of a strong decoction of the dead  
nettle root of our country. This article  
he has used for several years, and with  
very beneficial effects. He describes  
it as the most effectual astringent  
in this disease, with which he is ac-  
quainted, resting easily on the stomach  
and producing a cure in many cases by



a few doses. He further states that after a short use, castor oil, sometimes is given for the purpose of removing constipation. Of a decoction made by adding a pint of common water to one ounce of the Guinea root, the ordinary dose is a dessert-spoonful, provided no circumstances.

During this period of the disease, should there be great irritation, with aphæ of the mouth, medicine, which have a tendency to corrode the system should be used as lime water in baths or the bark jackets; called lemon juice, given cold, has also been recommended as an efficient remedy. Rinsing the mouth with a solution of such bocals of soda, will in most cases remove the aphæ.

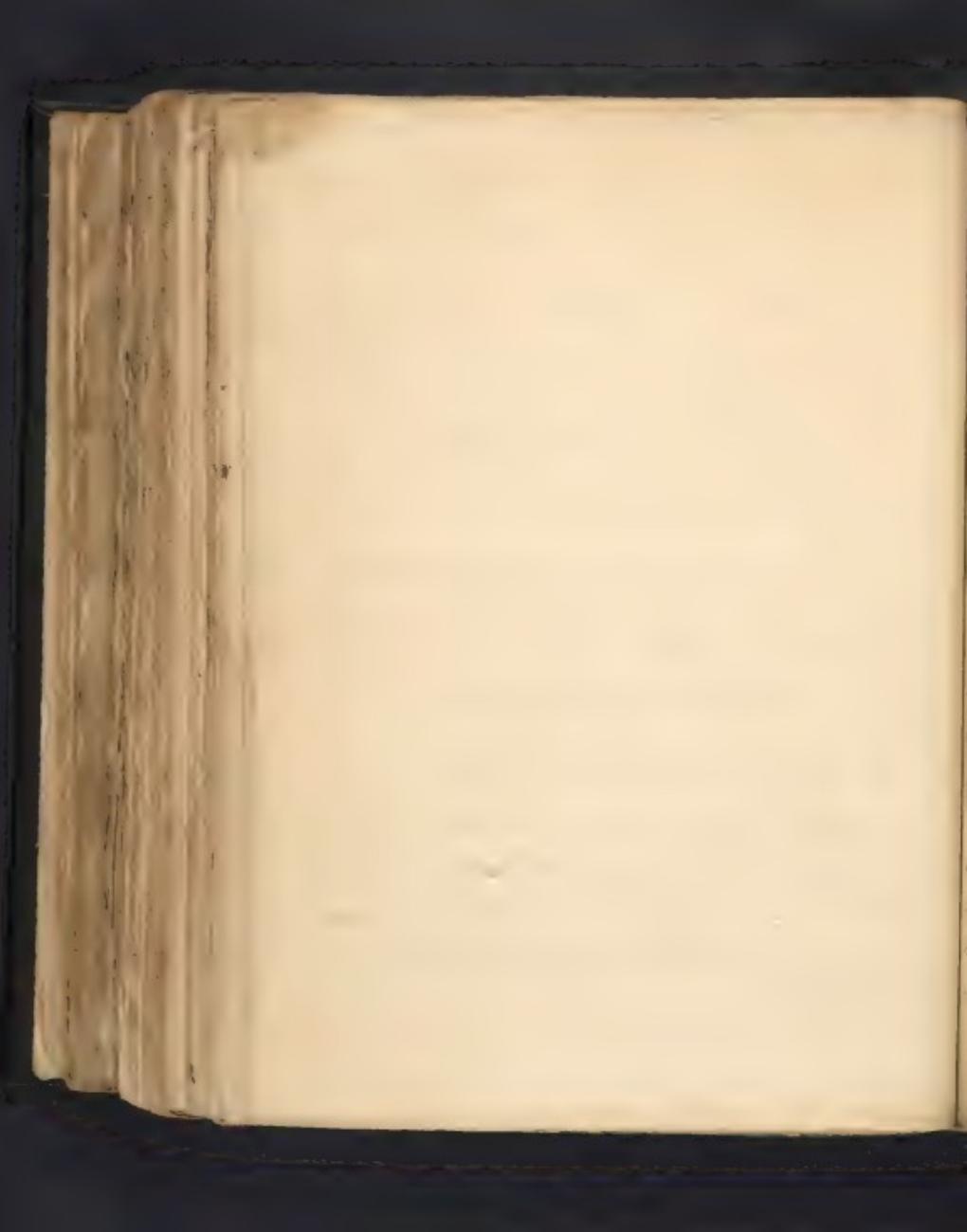
During convalescence the patient should



be qualified in any kind of food the appetite may crave; for it has been observed, that, in this state of the disease, when the child has been supplied with those nourishments, which it seems particularly to desire, its recovery was very much accelerated. A desire for all meats is always a most favorable indication, and the patient should never be deprived from any kind whatever.

The diet if not contra indicated, by the signs of the patient, should generally consist of soups, beef-tea, and the essence of beef. Milk punch is also very good.

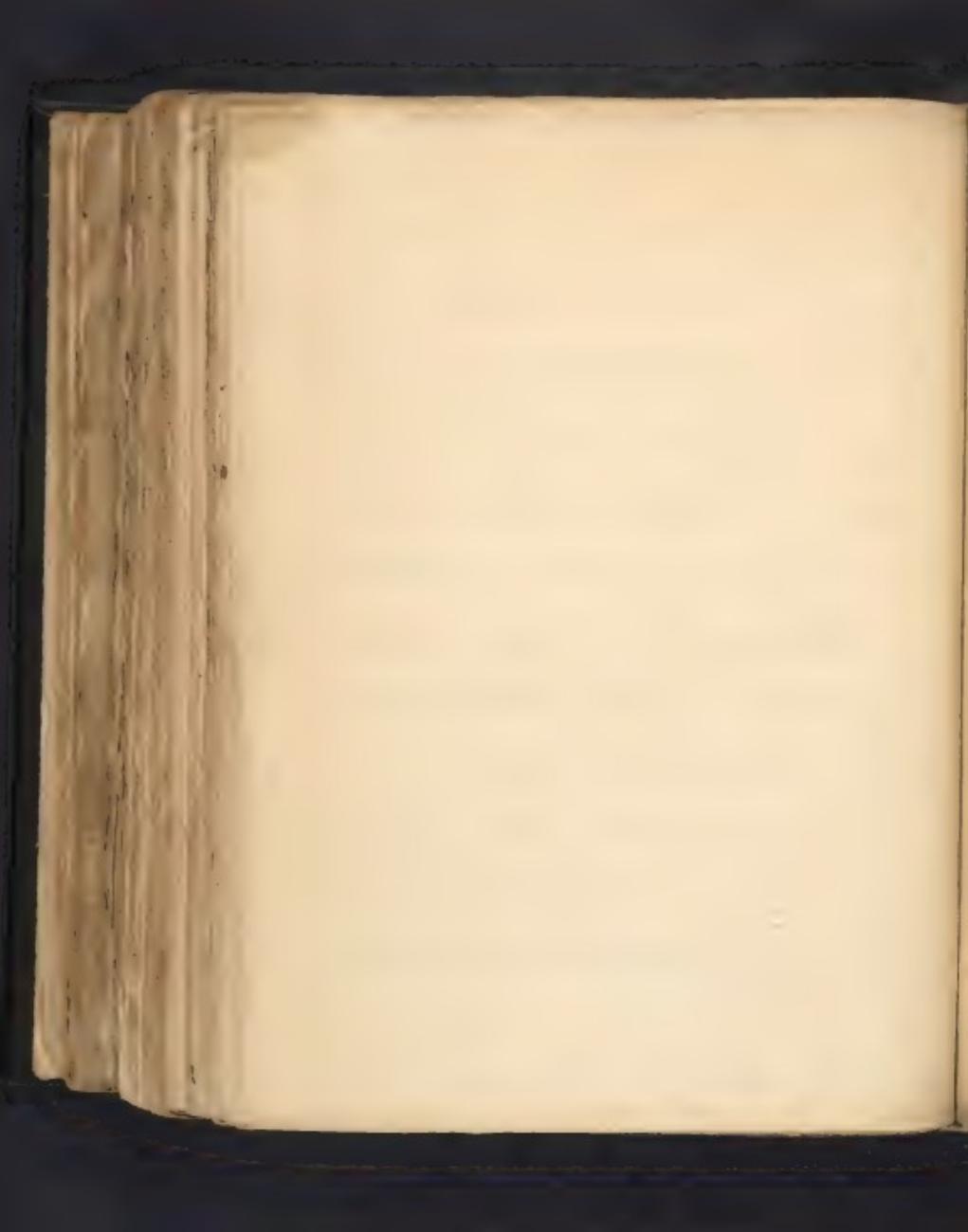
He should walk or ride, a short distance beyond the outskirts of the city at least once a day, and shouldodge in the most elevated and best ventilated apartment in the house.



All clothing should consist of flannel, properly adjusted, and kept clean.

So flannel will not be indomitable in thickness will win almost all, however combined is a beneficial agent. It passes the winter flying, with two stages to the house.

I have now little time to write, but I may return to the subject again & the next day or two will be, but it is intended for the winter, by no means entire circumstances, however, does the new outfit last so long. The high temperature is in most cases comparatively slight, rarely, say, three days, not more than three days the mercury near the patient to the country. I must have very severe to remark

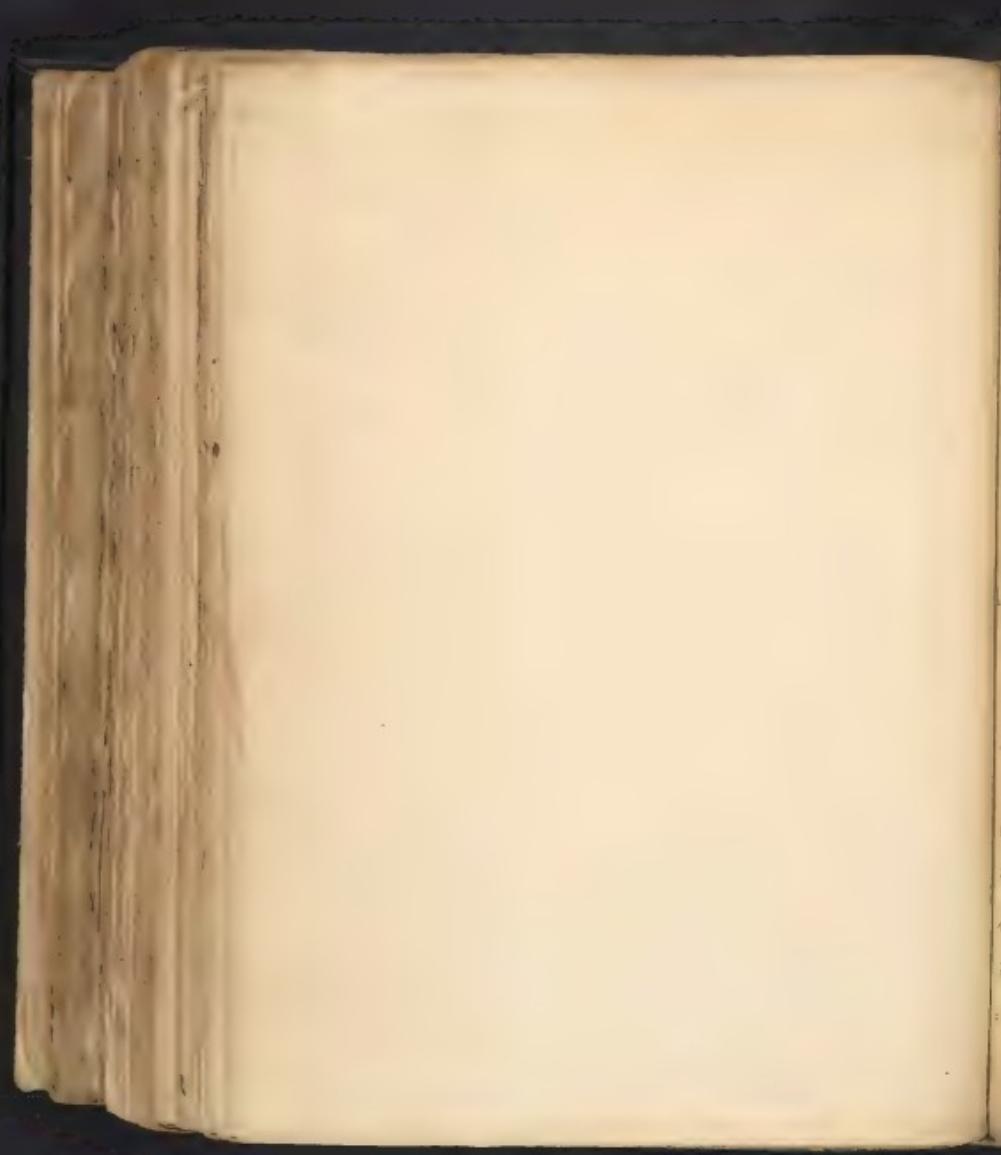


will always feel no more to do with you & your  
children & will be better provided for in another  
country & another place; and if you do not  
believe the cows instead of having them  
they should be kept up. & to this time  
lets two other cows happen to have been  
diseased & notwithstanding the intention  
the other slaves to knock out heads.

or creatures & a day more to  
receive than another as it may be well for  
me to suppose to make out that those who  
are in a violent & unjust condition  
infantime should —

I had made during the day, and hedge  
it up at one end with a matress or the most wretched  
and slender of boards.

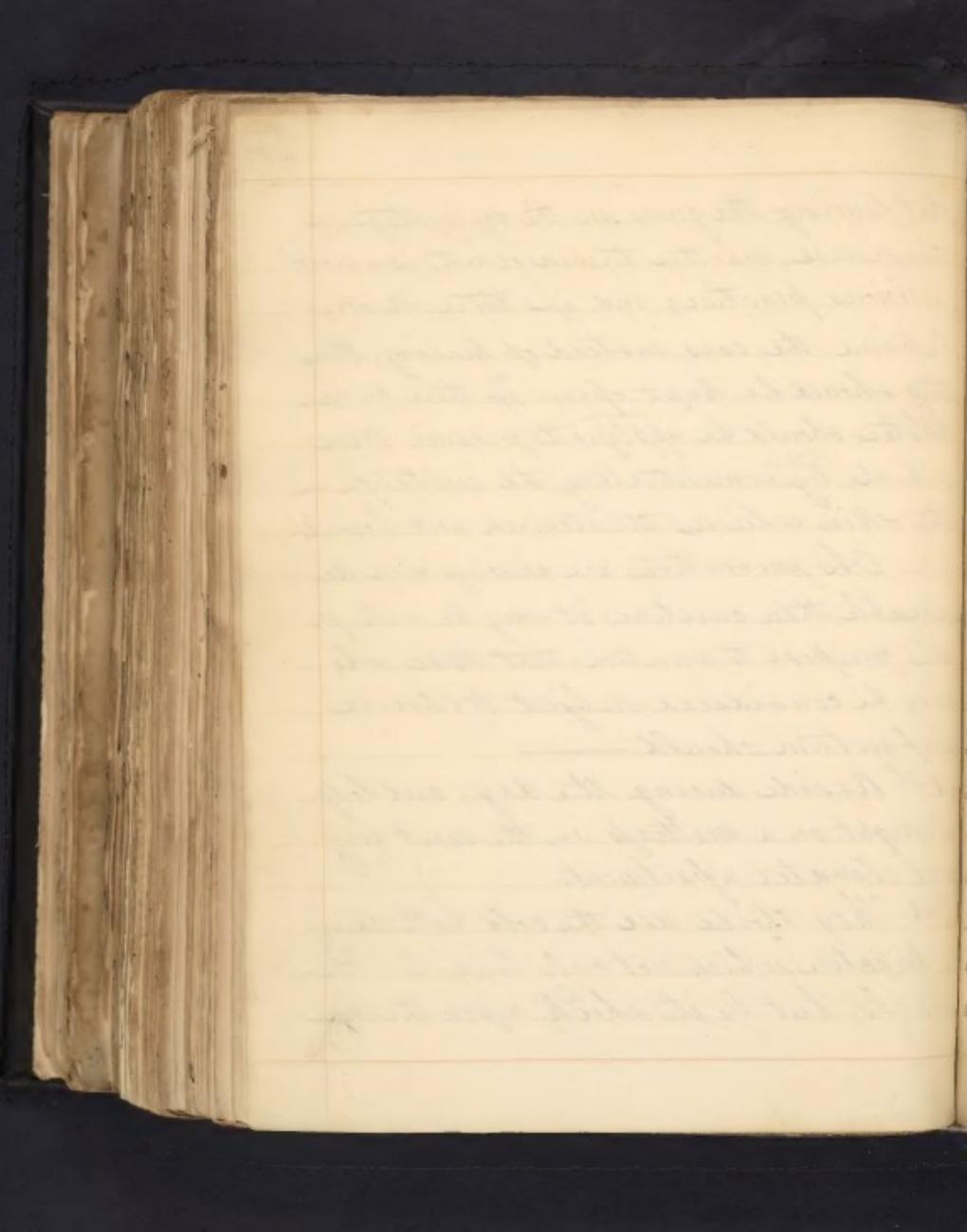
and he should use the cold bath with  
a beach combing & wash his hair & Do  
this but — it shewt upon the body



time, preserves undisturbed the relation  
between the skin and alimentary canal.

The plunging bath is the best, and the  
patient should recover from the first  
shock, before he is subjected to the second.  
But attention should be paid to the dress  
of children, which should be adapted  
to the state and changes of the atmosphere.  
Flannel, next the skin, makes the best  
dress.

4th The diet should be particularly at-  
tended to. If the child has not been wean-  
ed, (and weening it is thought predispos-  
es to Cholera,) the mother's milk is its  
best nourishment. For the first few  
months, after the child may have been  
weaned, the most proper food is milk,  
and some of the pure farinaceous  
vegetables, as arrow root, tapioca, or



biscuit victuals, made by boiling, pounded crackers in milk, salt meat, and salt fish, are also considered very serviceable.

5th During sentation, a strict attention should be paid to the state of the pens, and if found tumid, or inflamed, lanceing will be necessary.

6th Removal to the country is always of primary importance.

Louis Waller Jr.

Iredesefbury

Virginia

the grand Duke himself  
and his party